



## INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification <sup>6</sup> :  A01K 15/02		A1	(11) International Publication Number: <b>WO 99/25183</b>  (43) International Publication Date: 27 May 1999 (27.05.99)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US98/23798  (22) International Filing Date: 11 November 1998 (11.11.98)		(74) Agents: FIELDS, Gary, D. et al.; Fields & Johnson, P.C., Suite 5600, 8480 East Orchard Road, Englewood, CO 80111 (US).	
(30) Priority Data: 08/972,549 18 November 1997 (18.11.97) US		(81) Designated States: CA, JP, US, European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).	
(63) Related by Continuation (CON) or Continuation-in-Part (CIP) to Earlier Application US 08/972,549 (CON) Filed on 18 November 1997 (18.11.97)		Published <i>With international search report.</i>	
(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): BOUNCE, INC. doing business as THE KONG COMPANY [US/US]; 16191-D Table Mountain Parkway, Golden, CO 80403-1641 (US).			
(72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): MARKHAM, Joseph, P. [US/US]; 12094 West 75th Place, Arvada, CO 80005 (US). JOHNSON, Brent, P. [US/US]; 6081 South Forest Court, Littleton, CO 80121 (US). FIELDS, Gary, D. [US/US]; 12740 North Spring Creek Road, Parker, CO 80138 (US).			
(54) Title: PET TOY PRODUCT WITH INTEGRAL TREATS RECEIVING RECEPTACLES			
(57) Abstract <p>A pet toy product (T7) for holding one or more animal treats (100) has a body member (92) having an outer surface with one or more recesses (96, 94) for removably holding one or more animal treats (100). The recesses may be of varying depth so that the treats in the deeper recesses (96, 94) are more difficult for the animal to extract than are the treats in the shallower recesses. The recesses may be circular, triangular, irregular, in the form of a groove or any other suitable configuration. The outer surface of the toy may be raised to accommodate the recesses or the recesses may extend into the surface. The pet toy may have recesses forming openings which extend through the side wall of the pet toy product for receiving treats. With the structure recited, the pet owner can replenish the treats as often as necessary to maintain the pet's interest in the toy. Different treats can be provided with different nutritional values and tastes. Because some treats will be more difficult for the animal to remove than others, the animal can be kept occupied for several hours before the treats need to be replaced again. The treats may be held in the recesses by friction, adhesive or adhesion.</p>			

**FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY**

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AL	Albania	ES	Spain	LS	Lesotho	SI	Slovenia
AM	Armenia	FI	Finland	LT	Lithuania	SK	Slovakia
AT	Austria	FR	France	LU	Luxembourg	SN	Senegal
AU	Australia	GA	Gabon	LV	Latvia	SZ	Swaziland
AZ	Azerbaijan	GB	United Kingdom	MC	Monaco	TD	Chad
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	GE	Georgia	MD	Republic of Moldova	TG	Togo
BB	Barbados	GH	Ghana	MG	Madagascar	TJ	Tajikistan
BE	Belgium	GN	Guinea	MK	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	TM	Turkmenistan
BF	Burkina Faso	GR	Greece			TR	Turkey
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary	ML	Mali	TT	Trinidad and Tobago
BJ	Benin	IE	Ireland	MN	Mongolia	UA	Ukraine
BR	Brazil	IL	Israel	MR	Mauritania	UG	Uganda
BY	Belarus	IS	Iceland	MW	Malawi	US	United States of America
CA	Canada	IT	Italy	MX	Mexico	UZ	Uzbekistan
CF	Central African Republic	JP	Japan	NE	Niger	VN	Viet Nam
CG	Congo	KE	Kenya	NL	Netherlands	YU	Yugoslavia
CH	Switzerland	KG	Kyrgyzstan	NO	Norway	ZW	Zimbabwe
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	NZ	New Zealand		
CM	Cameroon			PL	Poland		
CN	China	KR	Republic of Korea	PT	Portugal		
CU	Cuba	KZ	Kazakhstan	RO	Romania		
CZ	Czech Republic	LC	Saint Lucia	RU	Russian Federation		
DE	Germany	LI	Liechtenstein	SD	Sudan		
DK	Denmark	LK	Sri Lanka	SE	Sweden		
EE	Estonia	LR	Liberia	SG	Singapore		

PET TOY PRODUCT WITH INTEGRAL TREATSRECEIVING RECEPTACLESTechnical Field

5 This invention relates to a pet toy product, and more particularly to a pet toy product having recesses and openings for receiving treats.

Background Art

10 Chewable pet toys have been available for many years. Many are impregnated with odors or flavoring materials which are attractive to the animal for which the toy is intended. These toys can be made of various materials, such as rawhide, rubber and plastic. The shortcoming of these products is that after a period of time, the flavor and/or odor becomes less strong and the animal loses interest in the toy. No means is provided for subsequently enhancing the flavor and odor of the toy.

15 Additionally, many toys which are impregnated with the odors or flavorings are not intended to be consumed by the animal. However, because of the stimulation provided to the animal, it may consume the entire pet toy which may cause the animal to choke or to experience fatal gastrointestinal problems by ingesting the toy.

20 Tay (U.S. Des. Patent No. 188,179) discloses a pet food holder which has a hollow center for holding food.

Allis (U.S. Patent No. 1,149,170); Jones (U.S. Patent No. 260,851); and Edwards (U.S. Patent Nos. 4,513,014 and 4,557,219) each disclose a pet toy having a flavoring material impregnated therein.

25 Fisher (U.S. Patent No. 3,104,648) discloses a pet toy which is odor impregnated.

Markham (U.S. Patent No. Re. 34,352) discloses a therapeutic pet toy having parallel peripheral grooves in which oral hygiene substances may be placed.

5 Axlerod (U.S. Patent No. 3,871,334) and Miller (U.S. Patent Nos. 3,899,607 and 4,032,665) each disclose pet toys which are both flavor and odor impregnated.

10 Jungle Talk International sells a product for birds made of wood which has openings in which nuts are firmly fixed. The bird must substantially destroy the wood in order to reach the nuts. Thus, the product cannot be reloaded and reused.

A product known as a "Buster Cube" has an opening in which dry dog food is poured. As a dog knocks it over in playing with it, the food runs out so that the dog can eat it.

15 Although each of these inventions is suitable for its intended purpose, none provide means on the exterior surface thereof for holding animal treats for keeping the animal interested in the toy.

#### Disclosure of The Invention

In accordance with the present invention, a pet toy product is provided for holding, by friction or adhesion, one or more animal treats 20 wherein the toy has a body member having an outer surface with one or more recesses for receiving one or more animal treats. The term "treat" is intended to include any items which are attractive to or are consumed by an animal. The recesses may be of varying depth so that the treats in the deeper recesses are more difficult for the animal to extract than are the 25 treats in the shallower recesses. The recesses may be circular, triangular, irregular, or in the form of a groove or any other suitable configuration.

The outer surface of the toy may be raised to accommodate the recesses or the recesses may extend into the surface. Also, the pet toy may have a recess forming an opening which extends completely through the side wall for receiving a treat. With the structure recited, the pet owner can replenish the treats as often as necessary to maintain the pet's interest in the toy. 5 Different treats can be provided with different nutritional values and tastes. Also, because some treats will be harder for the animal to remove than others, the animal can be kept occupied for several hours before the treats need to be replaced again. The toy may be made of molded rigid or flexible material which can accommodate different types of treats. This construction allows the toy to be used repeatedly by refilling the recesses 10 with more treats.

Additional advantages will become apparent from the description which follows, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

## 15 Brief Description of The Drawings

Figure 1 is an illustration of an animal playing with one form of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of a variety of forms of pet toy products embodying the invention;

20 Figure 3 is a fragmentary perspective view of a portion of a first embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention showing recesses of varying depth containing animal treats;

Figure 4 is a lateral section, taken along line 4-4 of Figure 3, showing the different depths of the recesses with treats therein;

25 Figure 5 is a fragmentary perspective view of a portion of a second embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention having longitudinal

grooves for receiving animal treats and showing a liquid treat being inserted into the grooves;

Figure 6 is a lateral section, taken along line 6-6 of Figure 5, showing the different depths of the recesses with treats therein;

5 Figure 7 is a fragmentary perspective view of a portion of a third embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention having longitudinal grooves which are raised above the surface of the toy;

10 Figure 8 is a fragmentary perspective view of a portion of a fourth embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention having a plurality of recesses formed in a plurality of raised areas;

Figure 9 is a lateral section, taken along line 9-9 of Figure 8, showing the different depths of the recesses with treats therein;

15 Figure 10 is a fragmentary perspective view of a portion of a fifth embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention having a triangular recess;

20 Figure 11 is a fragmentary perspective view of a portion of a sixth embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention having a recess extending through the side wall of the pet toy to form an opening for receiving an animal treat;

Figure 12 is a fragmentary perspective view, similar to Figure 11, but showing a treat positioned within the opening;

25 Figure 13 is a lateral section, similar to Figures 4 and 6, illustrating a fifth embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention having a plurality of recesses which include flexible cups;

Figure 14 is a lateral section, similar to Figure 13, illustrating another embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention having a plurality of recesses with grippers or extensions formed within the recesses;

Figure 15 is a lateral section, illustrating how a recess may be expanded because of its flexible characteristic to accommodate differing sized treats;

5 Figure 16 is a plan view of any of the embodiments illustrating how the recesses may deform or expand to accommodate treats having different sizes and shapes;

10 Figure 17 is a fragmentary perspective view of any of the embodiments illustrating a portion of the pet toy product having a star-shaped recess, a bone-shaped recess, a peanut-shaped recess, and a crescent-shaped recess; the recesses extending either completely through the side wall to form an opening, or only extending partially through the side wall;

Figure 18 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the pet toy product of this invention;

15 Figure 19 is a plan view of the embodiment of Figure 18;

Figure 20 is a perspective view of a dog occupied with the pet toy product of Figure 18 which has one or more treats inserted through recesses in the pet toy;

20 Figure 21 is a vertical section, taken along line 21-21 of Figure 18, illustrating interior details of the embodiment;

Figure 22 is another vertical section, taken along line 22-22 of Figure 21, illustrating additional interior details of the embodiment;

Figure 23 is a lateral section, taken along line 23-23 of Figure 21, further illustrating interior details of the embodiment;

25 Figure 24 is yet another vertical section, taken along line 24-24 of Figure 20, illustrating how pet treats may be dislodged from within or broken away from the pet toy;

Figure 25 is a lateral section, similar to Figure 23, illustrating a pet treat which extends continuously between opposing recesses formed on the pet toy product;

5 Figure 26 is a perspective view of one modification of the embodiment illustrated in Figure 18, wherein the upper opening has the shape of a fish;

Figure 27 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having an irregular slot shape;

10 Figure 28 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a combination triangle and rectangle;

Figure 29 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a slot with parallel slides;

Figure 30 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a KONG®-shape including dividers;

15 Figure 31 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a KONG®-shape without dividers;

Figure 32 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a cross-shape with rounded ends;

20 Figure 33 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a bell-shape;

Figure 34 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a butterfly-shape;

Figure 35 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a cross-shape;

25 Figure 36 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a modified cross-shape;

Figure 37 is a perspective view of one modification of the embodiment of Figure 18, illustrating the lower opening having an irregular shape;

5 Figure 38 is a fragmentary plan view of Figure 37, illustrating another irregular lower opening; and

Figure 39 is another fragmentary plan view illustrating yet another irregular lower opening.

#### **Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention**

In accordance with this invention, an animal, such as dog D, is 10 shown in Figure 1 playing with the pet toy product T of this invention. As best seen in Figure 2, the pet toy product may have a variety of configurations, such as ball T<sub>1</sub>, bone-shaped pet toy product T<sub>2</sub>, box-shaped pet toy product T<sub>3</sub>, elongated pet toy product T<sub>4</sub>, star-shaped pet toy product T<sub>5</sub> and annular pet toy product T<sub>6</sub>. The recesses shown in these pet 15 toy products can be of varying depths, as described below. These configurations are exemplary only and other configurations will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art and such other shapes are intended to be included within the scope of this invention.

One embodiment of pet toy product T is shown in Figures 3 and 4. 20 The pet toy product T includes a body member 10 with an outer surface 11 which generally defines the shape of the pet toy product T, which may have a hollow interior volume. Body member 10 has a depth defined by side wall 12 which includes a plurality of depressions or recesses, such as shallow recess 13, medium recess 14 and deep recess 16. Each of the 25 respective recesses has an animal treat 18 which may be inserted therein. The treat can be wedged into a recess in a rigid toy product or can be

resiliently gripped by the side surfaces of a flexible product. In other words, the treat is releasably and frictionally held in the recess. An adhesive could also be used to attach the treat within the recess. For example, this treat can be dry pet food. The animal can readily remove the treat 18 from shallow recess 13, but must work harder to recover the treat 18 in medium recess 14. Likewise, the animal must work extra hard to remove treat 18 within deep recess 16.

Another embodiment of pet toy product T is shown in Figures 5 and 6. Specifically, side wall 12 is provided with a plurality of grooves, such as shallow groove 20, medium groove 22 and deep groove 24. A treat 18 can be placed in each of these grooves so that the animal experiences different levels of difficulty in the recovery of the treats from the respective grooves. Additionally, a second liquid or paste treat 26, such as peanut butter or soft cheese, can be placed in the grooves, as from a dispenser 28. This type of treat will be retained by adhesion. This allows the animal to enjoy more than one treat with the same toy.

A further embodiment of the invention is shown in Figure 7 wherein the side wall 12 of pet toy product T is provided with raised portions 30 which form laterally spaced grooves 32, 34 and 36, respectively. As shown, these grooves can be supplied with one or more treats 18.

A still further embodiment of this invention is shown in Figures 8 and 9 wherein the side wall 12 of pet toy product T has a plurality of raised portions 38, 40 and 42. Raised portion 38 has a shallow recess 44 formed therein; raised portion 40 has a medium recess 46 formed therein; and raised portion 42 has a deep recess 48 formed therein. As shown, treats 18 can be placed in each of these recesses, thus providing different degrees of difficulty for the animal to remove them.

In the embodiment of Figure 10, side wall 12 of pet toy product T is provided with a triangular recess 50 for receiving a hard treat 52, such as a nut. This form of the invention is particularly attractive for birds, such as parrots, which can use their beaks and/or talons in the space between the corners of the recess and the treat to dislodge the treat.

5 Figures 11 and 12 disclose an embodiment wherein side wall 12 has a recess which extends completely therethrough to form an opening 54 through which a treat 56, such as rawhide can be received.

10 Figure 13 discloses an additional embodiment wherein side wall 12 has a plurality of recesses which may include a flexible cup 60 extending beyond the interior edge of side wall 12. As also shown in Figure 13, when a treat 61 is inserted within the recess, the flexible cup 60 may be deformed to accommodate the shape of the treat. The flexible cup 60 also provides frictional engagement with the treat to assist in retaining the treat within the recess.

15 Figure 14 discloses an embodiment wherein side wall 12 has a recess which includes one or more grippers or extensions 62 which assist in retaining the treat 61 within the recess. On the left-side of Figure 14, the recesses or grippers 62 are illustrated as being approximately midway within the depth of the recess, while the recess on the right-side of Figure 14 illustrates the grippers or extensions 62 which extend from the outer surface 11.

20 Figure 15 discloses in more detail the manner in which a recess from any of the embodiments may conform to treats having different sizes. As shown, two recesses of the same size may hold treats of differing sizes. A recess 64 is enlarged when a larger treat 68 is inserted therein. Conversely, recess 66 is not so enlarged when a smaller treat 69 is inserted therein. The

degree to which the side wall 12 can stretch or flex determines the range in which differing sized treats may be placed within the various recesses formed in the side wall 12.

Figure 16 illustrates another example of two recesses having the same size, one being deformed to receive a treat which has a cross-sectional shape different from that of the unstretched or undeformed recess. More specifically, recesses 70 are provided wherein an elliptical treat 74 will stretch or otherwise deform recess 70, while a round treat 72 more closely conforms to the shape of the recess 70 and therefore, does not deform or stretch its corresponding recess 70.

Figure 17 discloses another embodiment wherein side wall 12 may include a number of other different shaped recesses or openings. As shown, recess or opening 76 has a star-shape, recess or opening 78 has a bone-shape, recess or opening 80 has a crescent-shape opening, and recess or opening 82 has a peanut-shape.

Figure 18 illustrates yet another embodiment  $T_7$  of the pet toy product of this invention. This embodiment includes an outer surface 92 of a side wall 93 (Figure 21) which is formed in the shape of a round ball. The side wall 93 includes two opposed side openings 94 which are configured as bone-shaped openings. In addition to the pair of side openings 94, the pet toy product  $T_7$ , further includes an upper opening 96 and a lower opening 98. As illustrated in Figures 18 and 19, the upper and lower openings may be round. Furthermore, lower opening 98 may be of a diameter larger than that of upper opening 96. The terms "side", "upper" and "lower" as applied to side opening 94, upper opening 96 and lower opening 98 are used only to describe their position with respect to Figure 18. Therefore, these terms will not be interpreted as limiting the location of

these openings when the pet toy product  $T_7$  is rotated or turned in use. One or more treats 100 may be inserted through the side, upper and lower openings. As shown in Figure 20, a dog is occupied by the pet toy product  $T_7$ , wherein a treat 100 is placed in both the side, upper and lower openings.

5 As shown in Figure 21, the pet toy product  $T_7$  is especially adapted to receive treats 100 in the form of dog biscuits which have a substantially rectangular shape with flared ends thus giving the dog biscuits a bone-shape. These bone-shaped dog biscuits resemble those known as MILKBONE® biscuits as manufactured by Nabisco. Figure 21 illustrates 10 three treats 100; two treats being inserted in the side openings 94, and the third treat 100 inserted within upper opening 96.

Figures 22 and 23 further illustrate the manner in which the treats 100 are inserted within openings 94 and 96.

15 Figure 24 illustrates the manner in which the treats 100 may be broken away from and dislodged from the interior of the pet toy product  $T_7$ . The left-side of Figure 24 illustrates a treat 100 which has been broken across its mid-section and wherein a first part of the treat 101 may fall free from the pet toy product, while a second part of the treat 103 falls within the hollow interior of the pet toy product. The treat 100 inserted within 20 opening 96 may be broken in the same fashion as the treat on the left-side of Figure 24. That is, a first part 105 may break free from the pet toy while a second part 107 falls within the hollow interior. For both the treats 100 on the left-side and upper portion of Figure 24, the second parts 103 and 107 which fall within the hollow interior of the pet toy product may exit 25 through opening 98. Thus, opening 98 may be sized to allow the parts 103 and 107 to fall therethrough. Alternatively, opening 98 could be made of a

smaller size so that the animal must work to dislodge or extract parts 103 and 107 held within the hollow interior. The right-side of Figure 24 illustrates another way in which a treat 100 may be broken and dislodged from the pet toy product. More specifically, it is possible for the treat 100 to have a first part 109 which breaks away from the pet toy product leaving the remaining portion or part 111 of the treat 100 lodged within opening 94. In this circumstance, the animal could pull the remaining portion or part 111 of the pet treat 100 through opening 94 or the remaining portion or part 111 could be pushed through the opening 94 thus allowing it to fall through lower opening 98 like the other remaining portions 103 and 107.

The particular shape of any of the openings 94, 96 and 98 may be changed to best accommodate the desired treat to be held by the pet toy product. For example, if it is desirable to allow the animal to more easily extract or break a pet treat from the pet toy product, then the openings can be sized to allow the treats to more easily be broken or extracted.

Alternatively, openings 94, 96 and 98 can be reduced with respect to the particular desired treat to make it more difficult for the animal to not only break the treat, but also to extract or dislodge it from the hollow interior.

Figure 25 illustrates a modified treat 102 which extends continuously between side openings 94. It should also be understood that such a pet treat 102 could also extend continuously between openings 96 and 98. As with the description found above with respect to Figure 24, pet treat 102 may be broken and extracted or dislodged in the same manner as discussed with respect to treats 100.

Figure 26 is one modification to the embodiment of Figure 18, wherein round upper opening 96 is replaced by an upper opening 104 having a fish-shape.

Figures 27-36 illustrate other examples of shapes that may be incorporated for the upper opening.

Figure 27 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having an irregular slot-shape 106. Figure 28 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a combination triangle and rectangle-shape 108. Figure 29 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a slot-shaped with parallel sides 110. Figure 30 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a KONG®-shape 112 including dividers 113. KONG® is a registered trademark owned by the applicant of this invention, the shape also being illustrated in Trademark Registration No. 1,972,163. The dividers 113 may simply be thin walled extensions which traverse between the rounded portions of the KONG®-shape. As shown in Figure 30, there are three dividers 113. These dividers 113 can result in the KONG®-shape having four distinct openings shown as openings 132, 134, 136 and 138, respectively. Figure 31 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a KONG®-shape 112 without dividers 113. Figure 32 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a cross-shape 116 with rounded ends 117. Figure 33 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a bell-shape 118. Figure 34 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a butterfly-shape 120. Figure 35 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating an upper opening having a fanciful cross-shape 122. Figure 36 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating a modified cross-shape 124. Figure 37 is another perspective view of the pet toy product embodiment of Figure 18. Figure 37 illustrates a modified lower opening 126 which may replace the round lower opening 98 of

Figure 18. As shown, lower opening 126 may have a central circular shape opening which is surrounded by a plurality of extensions 127.

Figures 38 and 39 illustrate other modifications to the lower opening 126 of Figure 37. Specifically, lower opening 128 may include four extensions 129, and lower opening 130 may include five extensions 131.

Each of the openings or recesses described with respect to Figures 26-39 provide differing levels of difficulty for the animal to extract a desired treat. Additionally, for those openings in Figures 26-39 which include some extension which traverses outwardly from the center axis of the pet toy product, these extensions assist during the manufacturing process by enabling the core (not shown) to be more easily removed. In other words, as shown particularly in Figures 38 and 39, rather unique openings may be provided to challenge an animal in dislodging treats from the pet toy product, such unique openings also assisting in the manufacturing process by making it easier for removal of the core.

Although the interiors of the pet toy products of this invention have been shown as being hollow, it is also contemplated that the pet toy products' hollow interiors may be filled with material enabling the pet toy products to float. For example, buoyant Styrofoam®-like material could be placed within the hollow interiors of the pet toy products in order to allow the pet toy products to float. Such a buoyant object could be sized to still allow varying treats to be placed within the various recesses and openings of the pet toy products.

Although separate embodiments have been illustrated, it is to be understood that the characteristics of one or more embodiments can be incorporated within the same pet toy product. For example, as shown in

pet toy products  $T_1$  and  $T_5$ , these toys incorporate a combination of recesses 12, 14, 16, 44, 46, 48 and opening 54.

From the foregoing, the advantages of the present invention are readily apparent. A pet toy having various configurations is provided 5 which has recesses or grooves of varying size and depth for releasably receiving one or more animal treats. Because of the varying depth of the recesses, the animal will experience different degrees of difficulty in removing the treats from the pet toy product. Thus, the pet toy product can keep the animal occupied for extended periods of time. The pet toy 10 product can also be used for birds. The owner can replace the treats by inserting them as needed into the recesses. These treats can take the form of dry pet food, liquid or paste snacks, such as peanut butter or soft cheese. Nuts and vegetables pieces can be provided in the recesses when the pet toy product is used for a bird. In other words, any product to which the animal 15 is attracted can be placed in the recesses. Since the toy is not destroyed by the removal of the treats, the toy can be reloaded with additional treats or foods for reuse.

Although this invention has been described with respect to use with 20 pets, it is understood that it can be used with other animals not usually considered as pets.

CLAIMS**What is Claimed is:**

1. A pet toy product which includes one or more edible treats to induce an animal to play with said pet toy product, said pet toy product comprising:

5 a molded body member having a flexible side wall and an outer surface;

a plurality of treat gripping recesses geometrically arranged on at least a portion of said outer surface; and

edible food treats positioned in at least some of said plurality of treat gripping recesses.

2. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

at least one of said plurality of recess includes a flexible cup portion extending beyond said flexible side wall.

3. A pet toy product as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

at least one of said plurality of recesses includes grippers for resiliently holding said edible food treat positioned therein.

4. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

at least one of said plurality of recesses is star-shaped.

5. A pet toy product as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

at least one of said plurality of recesses is bone-shaped.

6. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 1, wherein:  
at least one of said plurality of recesses is peanut-shaped.
  
7. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 1, wherein:  
at least one of said plurality of recesses is crescent-shaped.
  
8. A pet toy product comprising:  
a body member having a flexible side wall with an outer  
surface;  
a plurality of recesses arranged across at least a portion of  
5 said outer surface;  
an edible food treat positioned in at least some of said  
plurality of recesses; and  
at least one of said plurality of recesses includes grippers for  
resiliently holding said edible food treat therein.
  
9. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 8, wherein:  
said body member encompasses a substantial closed hollow  
interior.
  
10. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 8, wherein:  
said plurality of recesses are of varying depths so that the  
edible food treats in the recesses having deeper depths are more difficult  
for the animal to extract than are the edible food treats in the recesses  
5 having shallower depths.

11. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 8, wherein at least one of said plurality of recesses includes:

a flexible cup portion extending beyond said flexible side wall.

12. A pet toy product to induce an animal to play with said pet toy product, said pet toy product comprising:

a body member having a flexible side wall and an outer surface;

5 a pair of recesses formed through said flexible side wall and positioned on substantially opposite sides of said body member, said pair of recesses having a desired shape; and

10 an edible food treat positionable in at least one of said pair of recesses, said edible food treat having a shape substantially conforming to said shape of said pair of recesses.

13. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 12, wherein:

said body member encompasses a substantial closed hollow interior.

14. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 12, further including:

a first additional recess positioned approximately 90° from said pair of recesses, said first additional recess being formed completely through said side wall.

15. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 12, wherein:

said edible food treat is two edible food treats, one each of said two edible food treats being placed within a corresponding one of said pair of recesses.

16. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 12, wherein:  
another edible food treat is placed in said first additional recess.
17. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 12, further including:  
a second additional recess positioned on a substantially opposite side of said body member from said first additional recess.
18. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 13, wherein:  
said edible food treat extends continuously between said pair of opposed recesses and through said hollow interior.
19. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 14 or 17, wherein:  
said first or second additional recesses has a KONG-shaped opening.
20. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 14 or 17, wherein:  
said first or second additional recesses has a bell-shaped opening.
21. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 14 or 17, wherein:  
said first or second additional recesses has a butterfly-shaped opening.

22. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 14 or 17, wherein: said first or second additional recesses has a cross-shaped opening.

23. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 14 or 17, wherein: said first or second additional recesses has an irregular-shaped opening including a plurality of extensions.

24. A pet toy product, as claimed in claim 19, wherein said KONG-shaped opening further includes:

at least one divider traversing said KONG-shaped opening.

25. A method of entertaining an animal, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a pet toy having an outer surface with a plurality of recesses formed therein;

5 inserting a pet treat in at least one recess of the plurality of recesses, the pet treat having a portion extending away from the pet toy when inserted therein;

giving the pet toy to the animal;

10 breaking the portion of the pet treat extending from the pet toy;

leaving a remaining portion of the pet treat within the pet toy;

and

dislodging the remaining portion of the pet treat from within the pet toy.

26. A method, as claimed in claim 25, wherein:  
said leaving step occurs by the remaining portion of the pet  
treat falling within the pet toy and being held by an inside surface of the pet  
toy.

27. A method, as claimed in claim 25, wherein:  
said leaving step occurs by the remaining portion of the pet  
treat being retained within said at least one recess.

28. A method, as claimed in claim 25, wherein:  
said leaving step occurs by a first part of said remaining  
portion free falling within the pet toy and being held by an inside surface of  
the pet toy, and a second part of said remaining portion being retained  
within said at least one recess.

29. A method, as claimed in claim 25, further including the steps  
of:  
providing a first recess of the plurality of recesses having a  
size to resiliently hold the pet treat therein;  
providing a second larger recess of the plurality of recesses ;  
and  
dislodging the remaining portion of the pet treat from within  
the pet toy by removing the remaining portion through said second larger  
recess.

30. A method, as claimed in claim 25, wherein said inserting step further includes the step of:

inserting the pet treat through two recesses of said plurality of recesses.

31. A method, as claimed in claim 27, further including the step of:

dislodging the remaining portion from within the at least one recess by pulling the remaining portion through the recess.

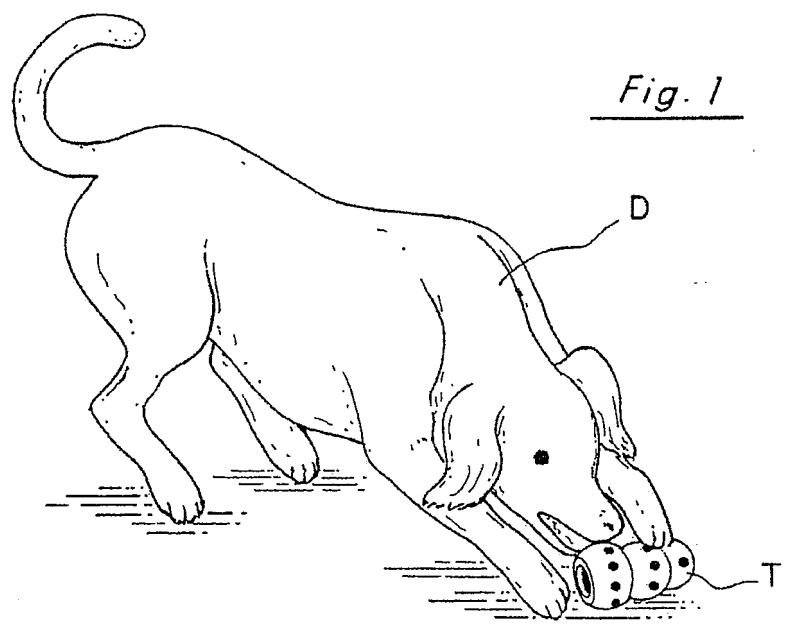
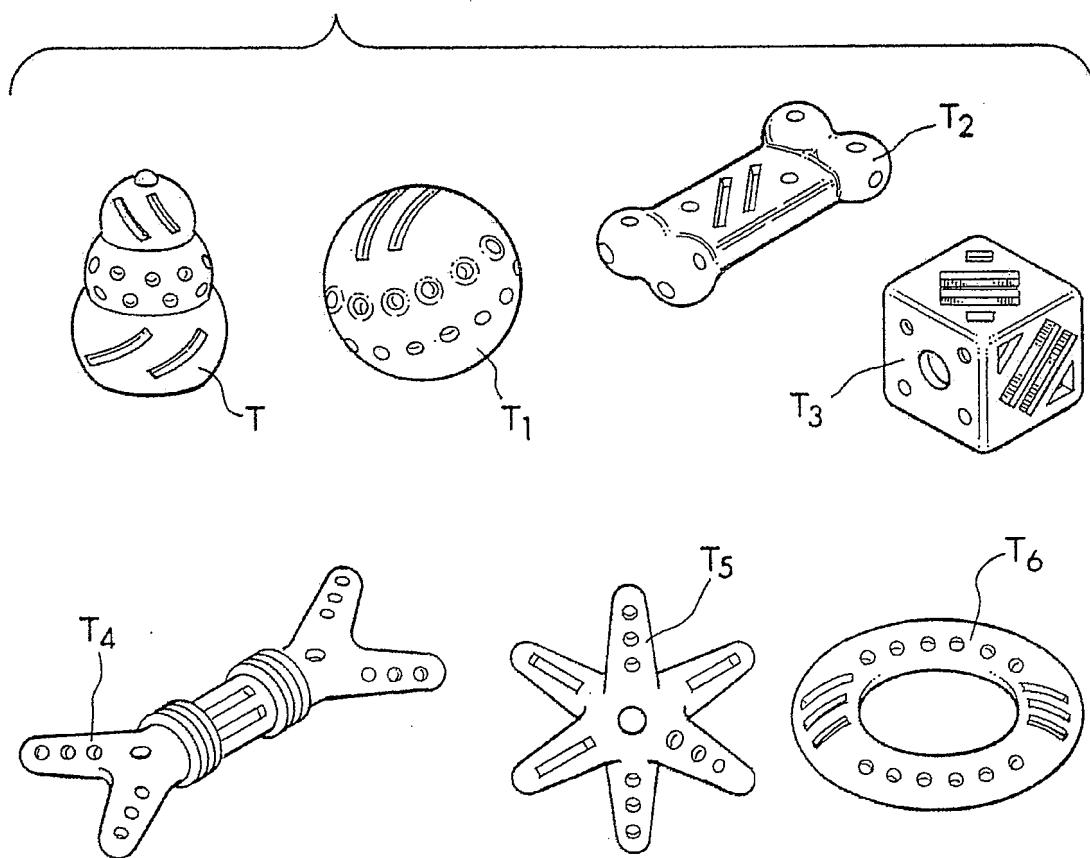
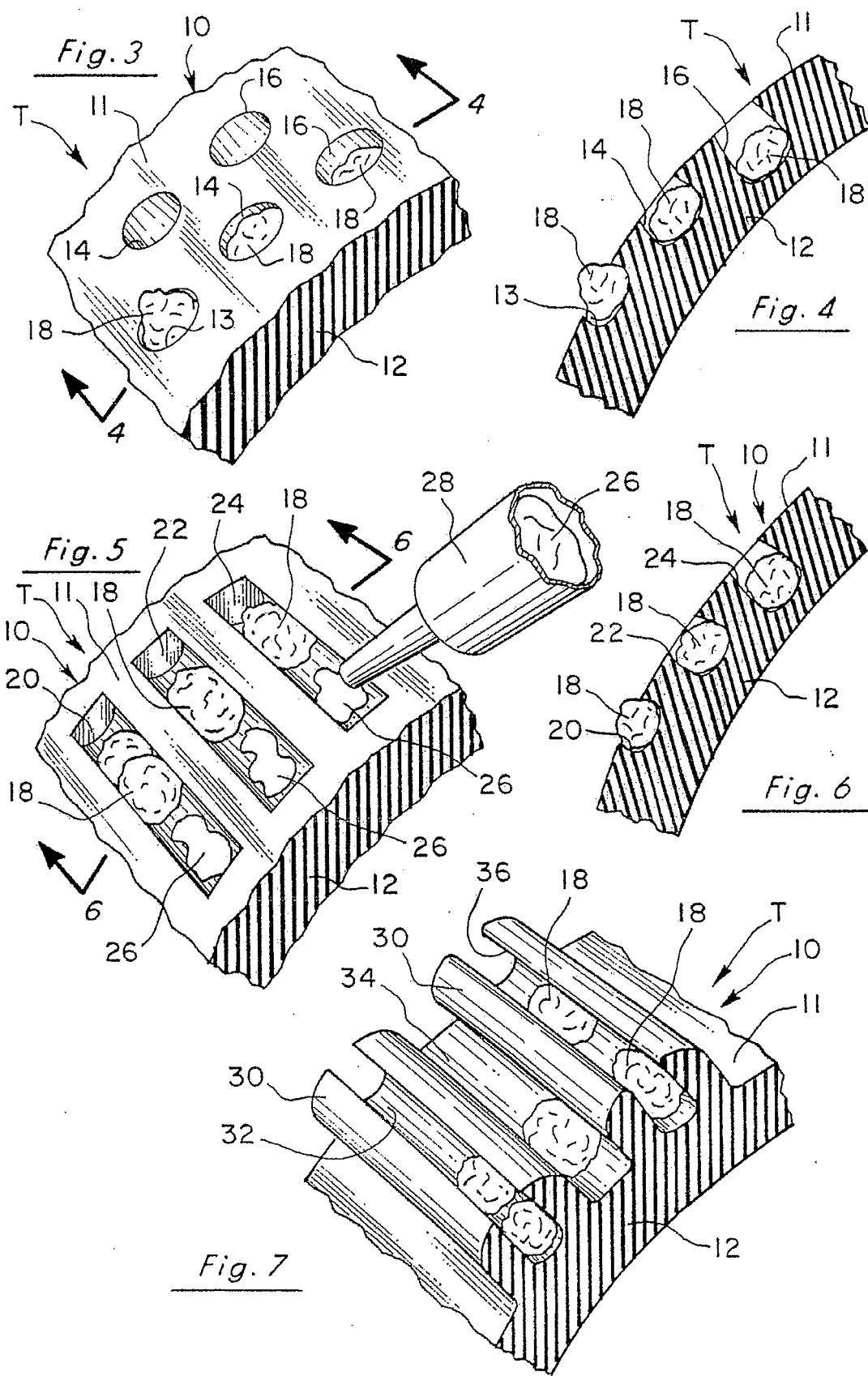
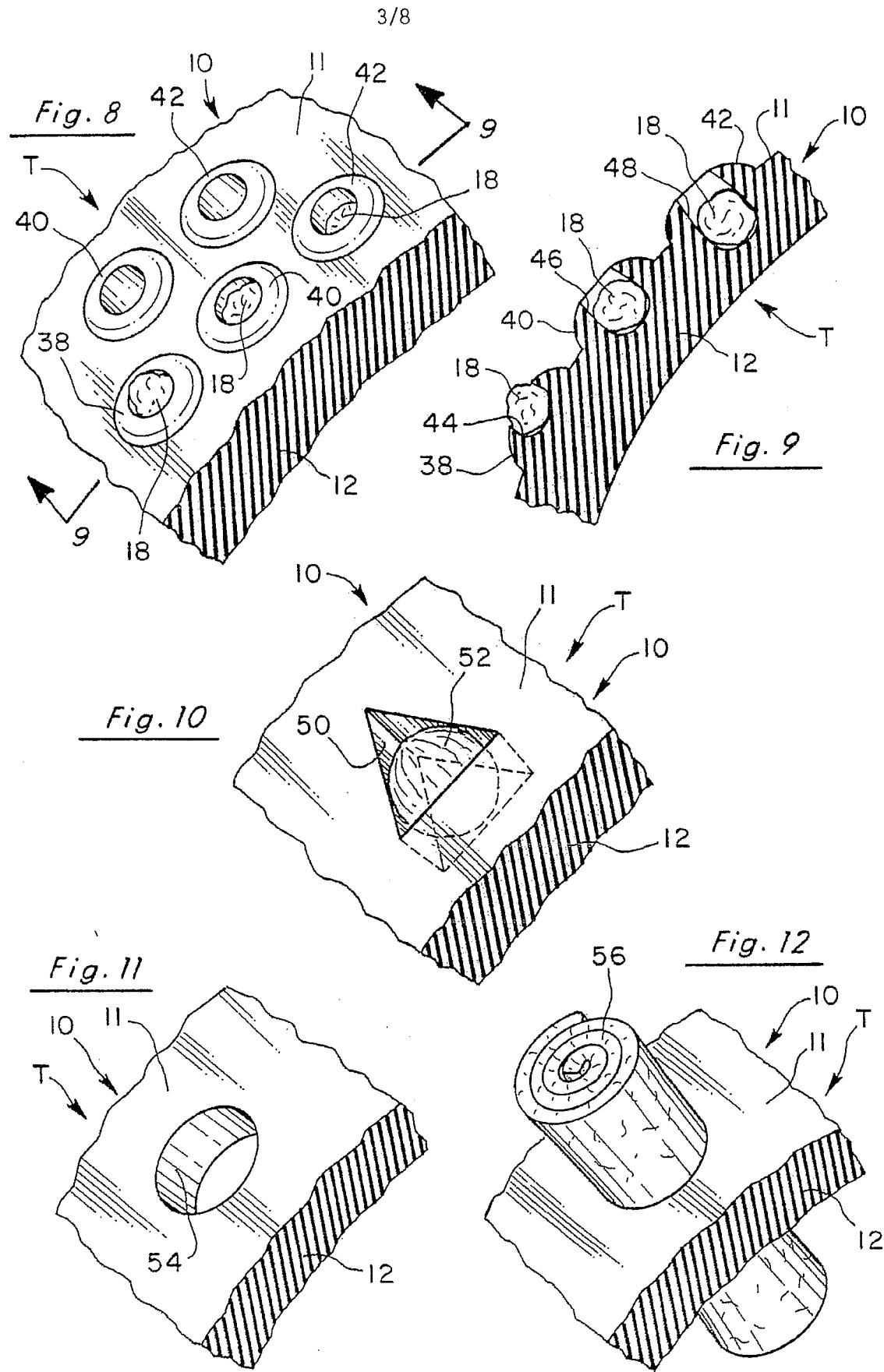
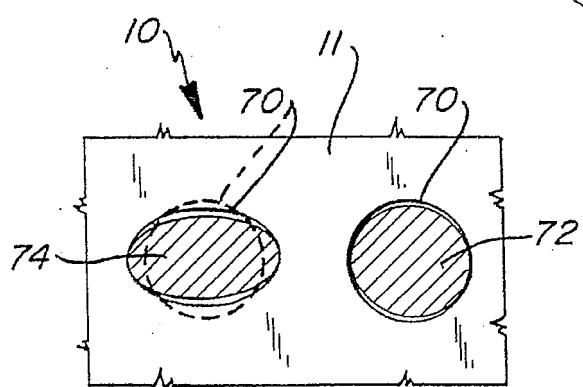
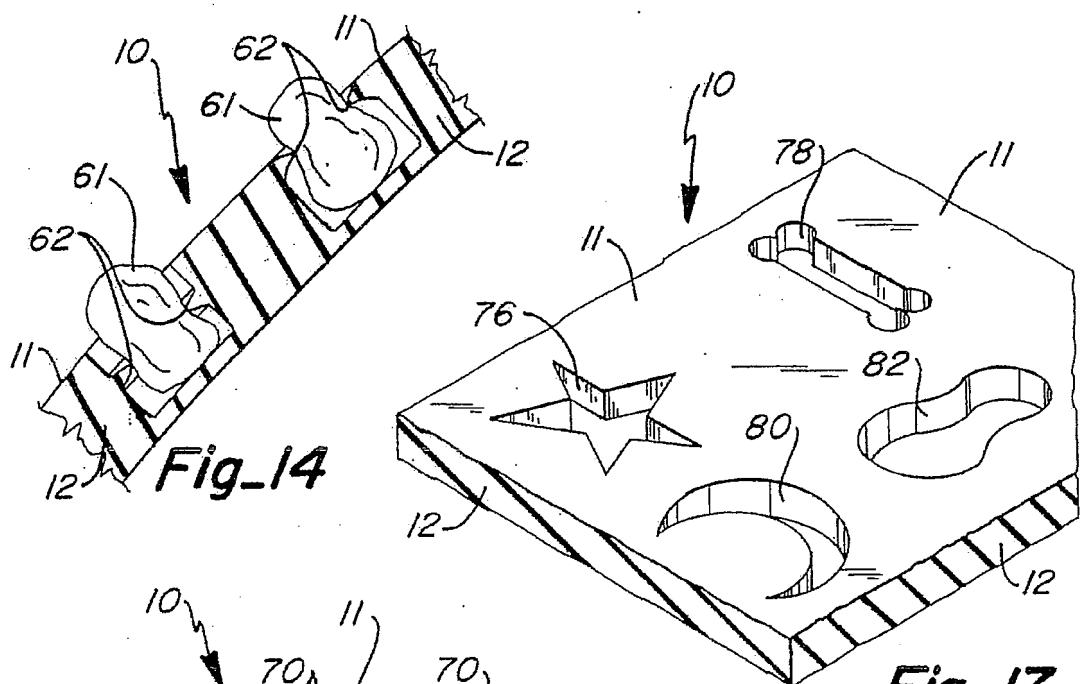
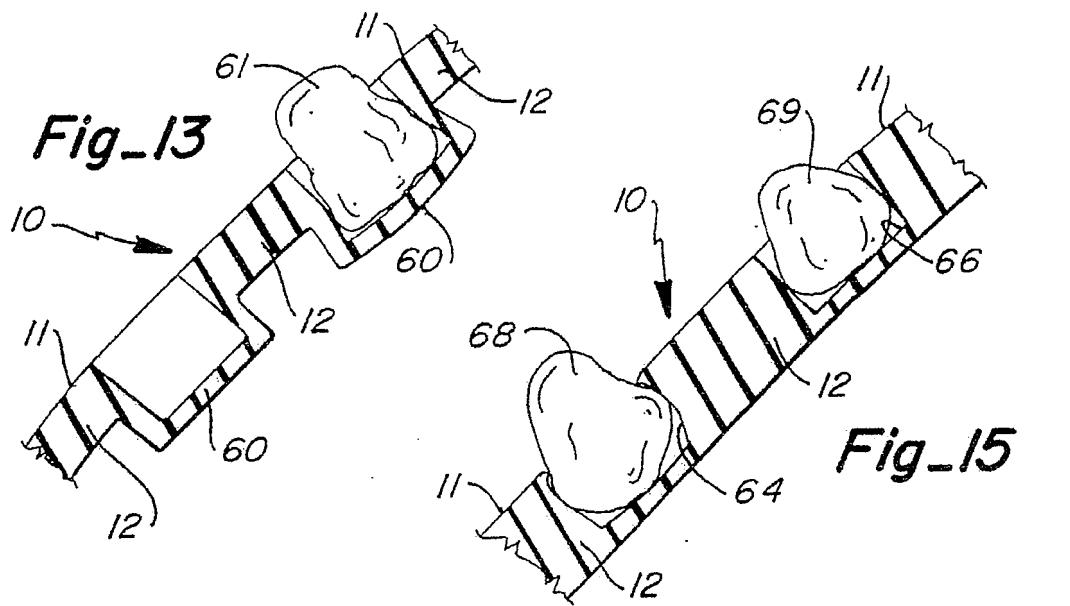


Fig. 2







**Fig-16**

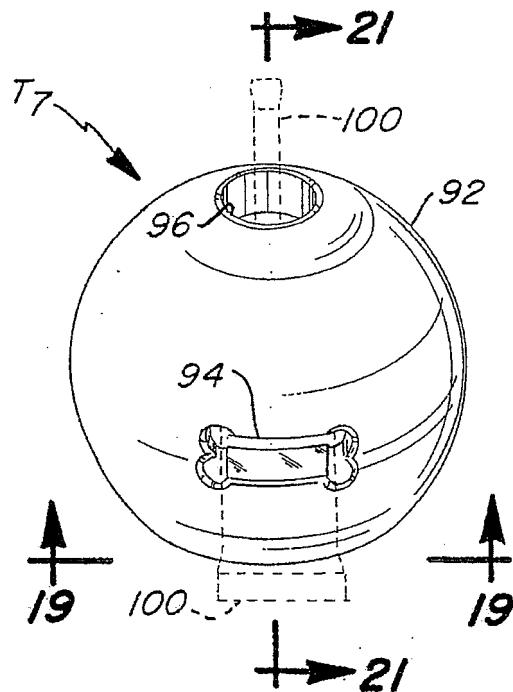


Fig. 18

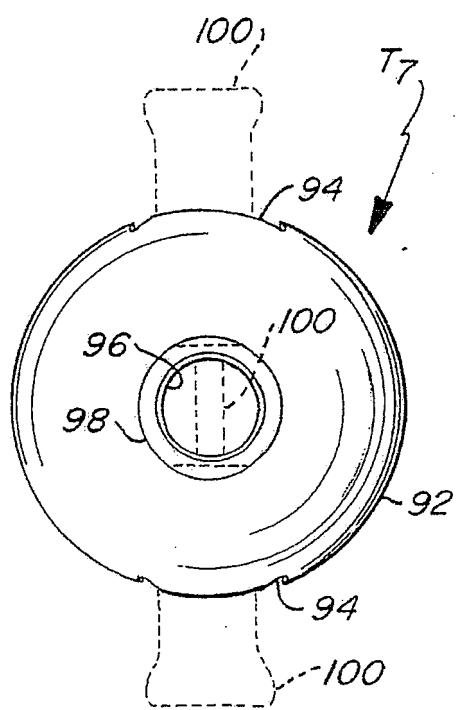


Fig. 19

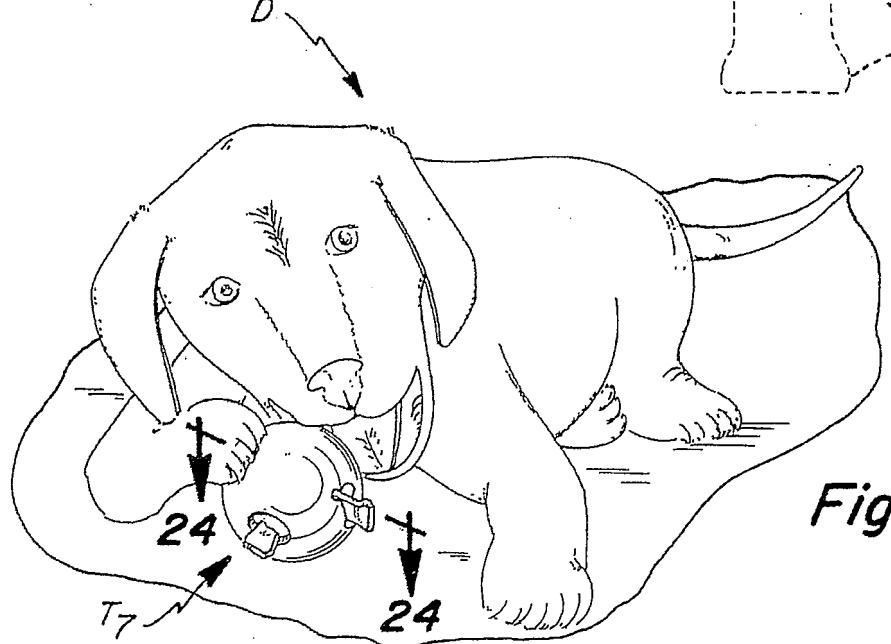


Fig. 20

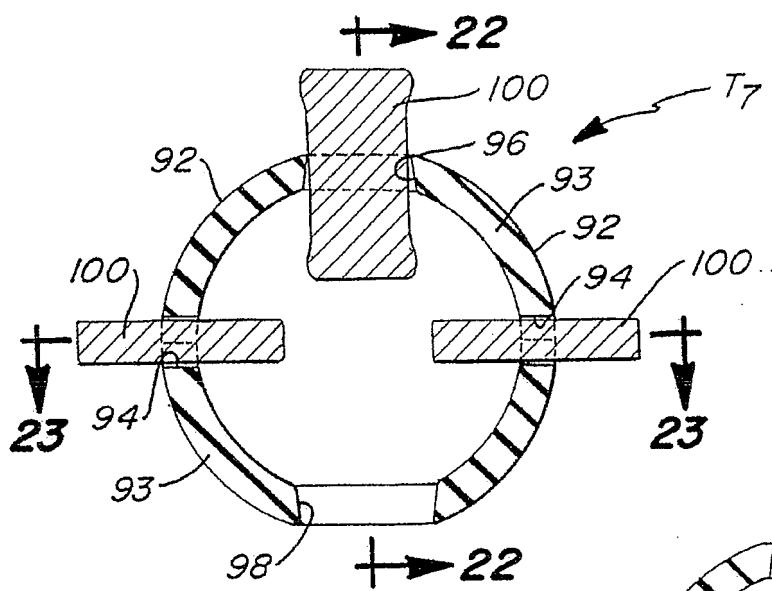


Fig. 21

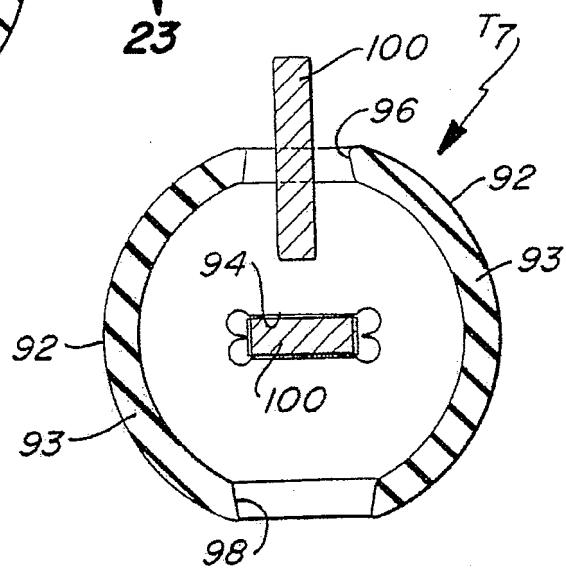


Fig. 22

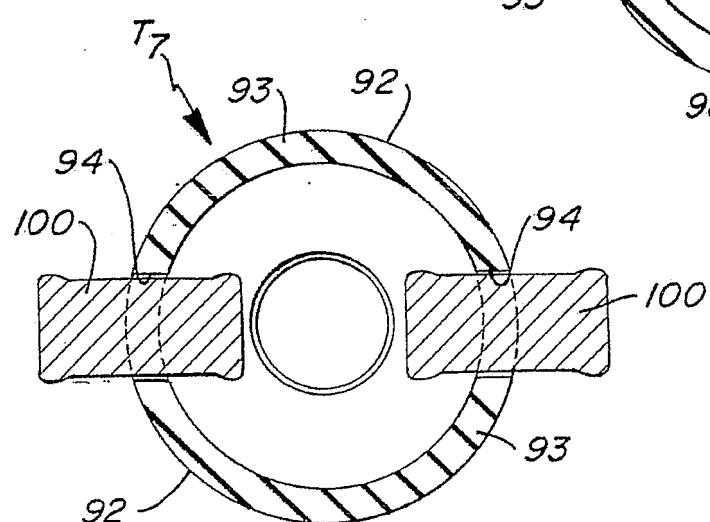
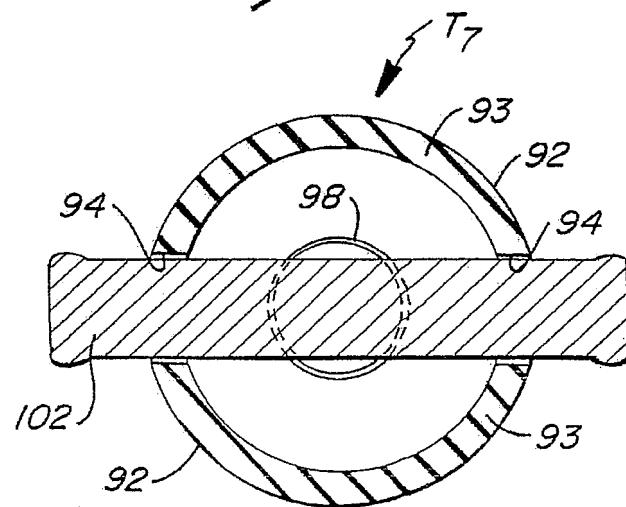
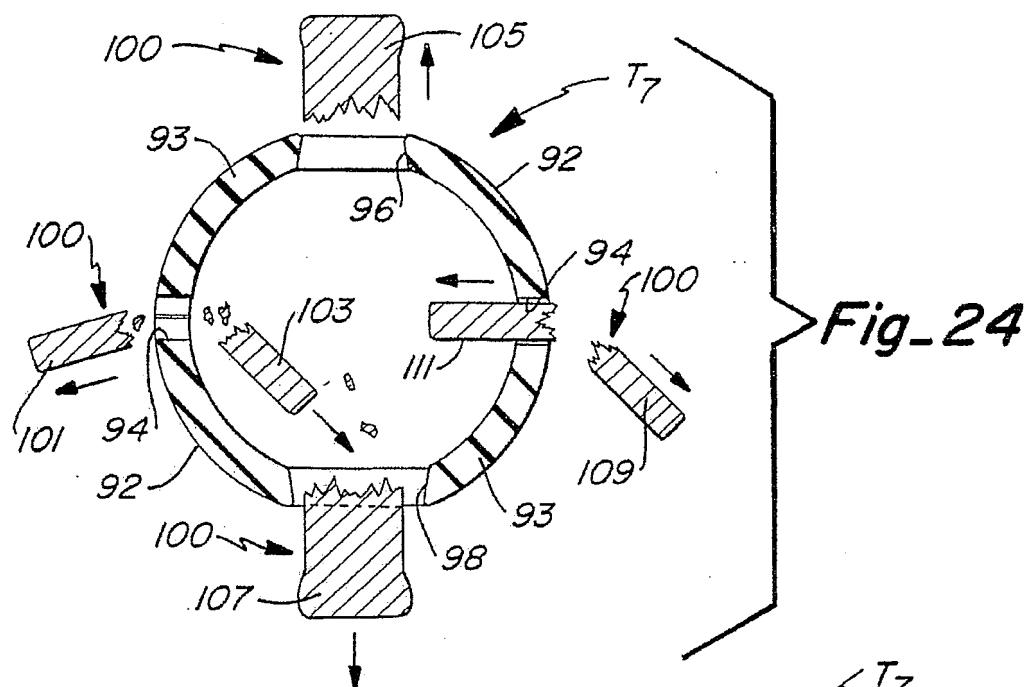


Fig. 23

7/8



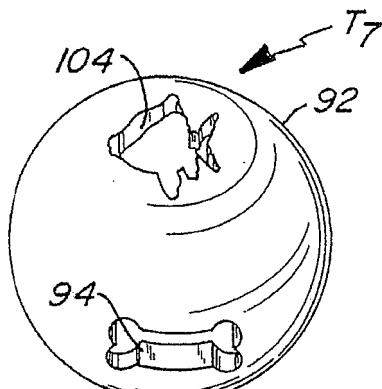


Fig. 26

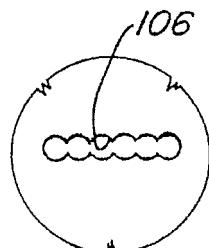


Fig. 27

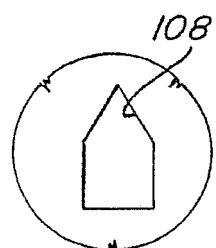


Fig. 28

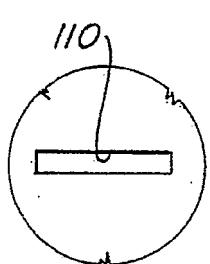


Fig. 29

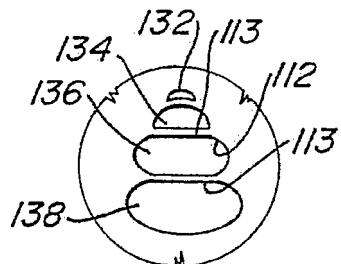


Fig. 30

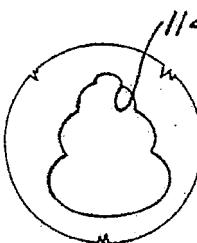


Fig. 31

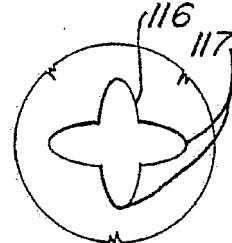


Fig. 32

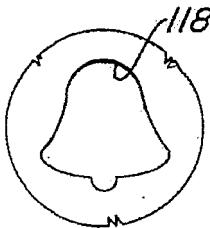


Fig. 33

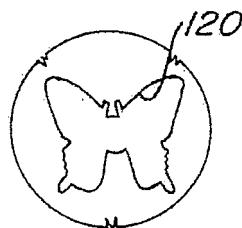


Fig. 34

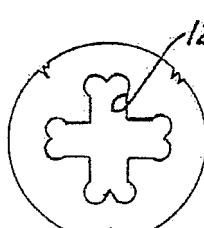


Fig. 35

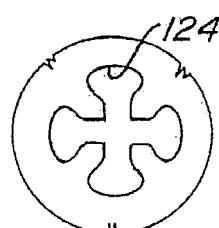


Fig. 36

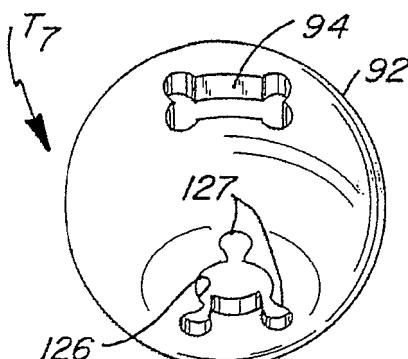


Fig. 37

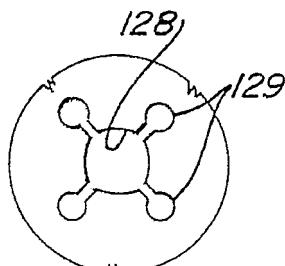


Fig. 38

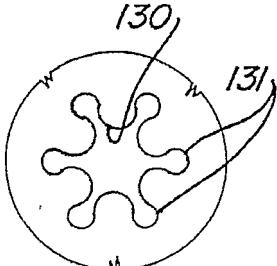


Fig. 39

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 98/23798

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**  
IPC 6 A01K15/02

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 A01K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category <sup>a</sup>	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
E	WO 97 47186 A (BOUNCE INC.) 18 December 1997 see the whole document -----	1,3,8-10
P, X	US 5 813 366 A (MAULDIN) 29 September 1998 see the whole document -----	1,3,4,8
A	US 5 343 828 A (HOUGHTON) 6 September 1994 see the whole document -----	1,8,9, 12,13,25
A	DE 295 19 685 U (EFFEM GMBH) 29 February 1996 -----	

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

<sup>a</sup> Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

Date of mailing of the international search report

25 February 1999

04/03/1999

Name and mailing address of the ISA  
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2  
NL 2280 HV Rijswijk  
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,  
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

von Arx, V.

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

## Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 98/23798

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 9747186 A	18-12-1997	NONE	
US 5813366 A	29-09-1998	NONE	
US 5343828 A	06-09-1994	NONE	
DE 29519685 U	29-02-1996	AU 1716997 A CA 2240524 A WO 9721341 A EP 0869710 A	03-07-1997 19-06-1997 19-06-1997 14-10-1998